Russian Writing Since the Revolution . . By Ernest J. Simmons

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by Howard W. Odum
Reviewed by Hal Borland

"BEHIND THE STEEL WALL"
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HOWARD W. ODUM has no positive solution, no cure-all; but he helps you to understand the problem . . . (See page 8)

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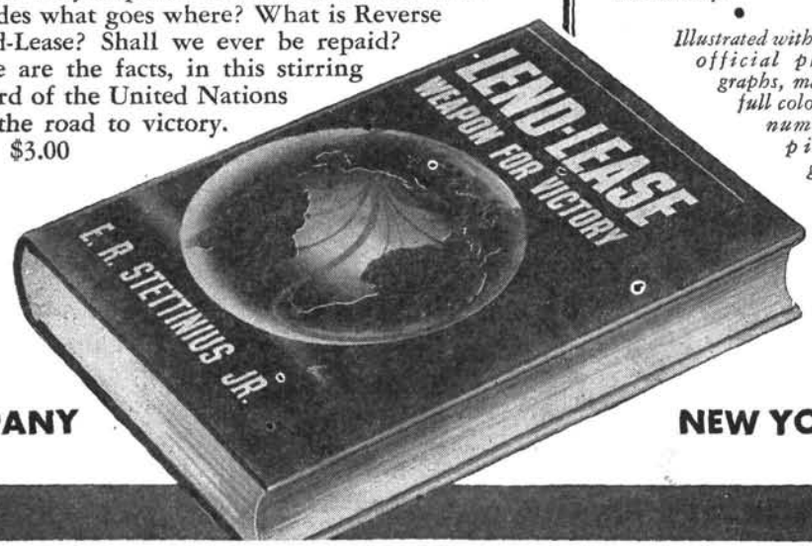

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY **NEW YORK**

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Russian Writing Since the Revolution

A Running Survey of the Record in Fiction, Poetry, and Drama

ERNEST J. SIMMONS

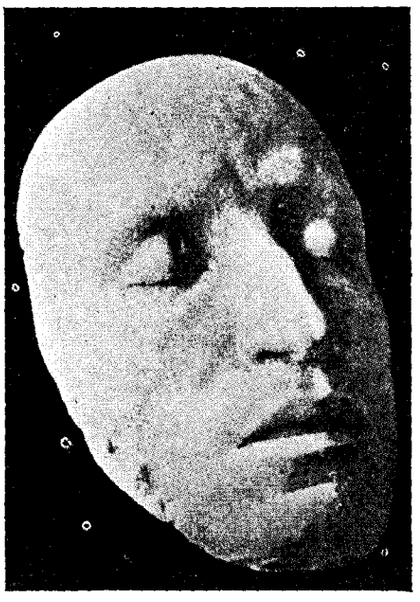
Soviet Fiction

WHEN Stalin in 1929 inaugurated the first Five-Year Plan, with the slogan "Socialism in One Country," a new attempt was made to regiment literature. A few interested Communists, with the critic Averbakh in the lead, seized control of the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP) and laid down the uncompromising program that the depiction of the Five-Year Plan and of the class war within its framework was the only problem of Soviet literature. An extensive campaign began, and all who refused to hew to the line found themselves outlawed. The results of this "planned literature" were for the most part unsatisfactory. Widespread discontent arose, and finally in 1932, largely through the influence of Gorky, a government edict dissolved the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, and the literary dictatorship was brought to an end. A general Association of Soviet Writers was formed which was thrown open to all; leading authorities expressed the belief that the majority of Soviet authors sympathized with the efforts of socialist construction, and that it was pointless to demand of them outward proofs of political loyalty. The extremists were defeated and once again the lesson was driven home that literature cannot flourish in chains.

The Five-Year Plan, in fact, provided plenty of material for fiction, and various writers treated it in various ways. Leonov, after his novel "The Thief" (1925), which dealt with the period of the New Economic Policy, turned his attention to socialist reconstruction in two novels, "Sot" (1930) and "Skutarevski" (1933). The first deals with the transformation of a northern wilderness into a busy center of the paper industry; the second concerns a large-scale electrification task. Scientific technicalities abound in these tales of socialist reconstruction, but Leonov's characteristic Dostoyevskian concern for the "inner man" and his spiritual doubts over the blessings of the revolution are everywhere in evidence.

Another fellow-traveler, Pilnyak, took up the theme of reconstruction in his novel "The Volga Flows into the Caspian" (1931). The plot involves the family tragedies of three engineers who are engaged in the task of diverting the course of a river, and the narrative is freely sprinkled with the technical details of construction, a practice generally adopted by the novelists of this period, and one that may have had an educative value but makes for hard reading. The novel clearly suggests that Pilnyak found it hard to accept the vast industrialization program. In his more recent work, "The Ripening Fruits" (1938), he evinces for the first time what seems like a sincere enthusiasm for the aims of the Soviet regime.

One of the most laboriously documented novels of socialist reconstruction was F. V. Gladkov's "Energy" (1933). He had previously written a tremendously popular novel, "Cement" (1927), that had described the zest with which the workers turned to social and economic reconstruction once civil war had ended. "Energy" tells the story of Dnieprostroy and of the men and women who built the vast construction. What was intended to be a great human epic of socialist labor and triumph runs dangerously close to being simply the excessively detailed reporting of a tremendous feat of engineering.



Death Mask of Pushkin

Much better as a reconstruction novel was Valentin Katayev's "Time Forward!" (1933), which tells the story of shock brigades competing in the pouring of cement. The action consumes only twenty-four hours, and the narrative moves with verve and excitement, for Katayev, one of the best Soviet novelists, is a master in depicting external action. While obvious sincerity, real joy, and justifiable pride were manifested in much of this fiction concerning the extraordinary accomplishments in the rapid industrialization of the country, a great many second-rate novels were turned out that pandered to the propaganda motifs of reconstruction at the expense of art. The unvarying pattern of Communist workers frustrating the efforts of bourgeois wreckers grew monotonous and often stupid.

To this period also belongs the flowering of the genius of perhaps the greatest novelist in Soviet literature —Mikhail Sholokhov. He began his long epic of Cossack life, "The Quiet Don," in 1929-1930, but interrupted it to write "Podnyataya Tselina" ("The Soil Upturned"; 1932-1933); a novel dealing with the life of the new collective-farm Cossacks. Sholokhov then returned to his masterpiece, which was not finished until 1940. He is the most Tolstoyan of Soviet novelists. There is much of Tolstoy's epic sweep and his wonderful sense of realism in "The Quiet Don," and Sholokhov's restraint and sense of proportion, his delicate handling of contrasts and parallels, and the simplicity of his character drawing are qualities that remind one of Tolstoy.

In the whole development of fiction up to this point, there was no lack of criticism of Soviet life, a fact not

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commonly appreciated abroad. Satire was a favorite weapon, and although it was often directed against capitalist civilization, satire of the vices and foibles of Soviet life and the absurdities of officialdom was freely tolerated, provided it did not attack the fundamental ideals of the new order.

E. I. Zamyatin, an older writer, was a powerful satirist; Ilya Ehrenburg combines a clever vein of satire with a bright attractive style; Bulgakov's "Devilry" (1925) pokes fun, not always good-natured, at Soviet life and bureaucracy; Katayev's fine novel, "The Embezzlers," (1928), is a mordant satire on two naively irresponsible State officials who steal; and two of the most recently popular satirical and humorous writers and devoted collaborators have been Ilya Ilf and Evgeni Petrov. The most widely read Soviet humorist, however, is Mikhail Zoshchenko. An early member of the Serapion Brothers, he lately has become a loyal supporter of the Soviet regime. More than ten volumes of his short stories have been published. Small incidents and comic trifles are most often his themes, but beneath the humor there is always latent a deft criticism of the abuses, foibles, and vices of Soviet life.

During the period of the Five-Year Plan, and even earlier, novelists by no means neglected those vitally real ethical problems that arose from the conflict of the New Communist conscience and ideals with the traditional views on sex, love, marriage and the family. Such problems concern S. N. Sergeyev-Tsenski, a writer of the old school, who has become a prominent Soviet novelist. The transition from bourgeois Russia to the new Soviet society is the principal theme of his series of ambitious novels under the title "Transfiguration" (1923). With a somewhat similar theme in mind, Panteleimon Romanov designed a series of novels under the general title of "Russia," but he soon abandoned this larger project for separate novels on less complicated aspects of the early period of Soviet life. Yuri Libedinski also addresses himself to ethical and social problems, especially in his best work, "The Birth of a Hero" (1930), in which he writes of love, family, and education in Soviet society.

Soviet Poetry

In the early days of the Revolution, Mayakovski and his followers rang the death-knell of symbolism. But the futurism that displaced symbolism soon betrayed its inadequacies. The telegraphic language and wireless imagination of the futurists baffled the proletariat. And Mayakovski eventually abandoned his poetic excesses, brought his muse down to the proletarian earth, and turned his great talents with a will to the service of the Revolution. He wrote poems about bread prices, The New Economic Policy, the food supply, and international events. He declared war on sensibility, meditation, and tenderness, and no doubt his denying these qualities, which were a genuine part of his nature, contributed to the disillusionment that helped to bring about his unfortunate suicide in 1930.

By insisting upon the communal function of verse, Mayakovski exercised a tremendous influence on subsequent poetry. His demand that Soviet poets participate in social creation and life was enthusiastically accepted by many younger writers, but none of these followers could equal the effectiveness of his message, and certainly none possessed the unique dynamism of his rhythms.

The poetry of this first period after the Revolution was declarative, spacious in its ideas, and given to abstract heroics. Soon the poets, like the novelists, were split into various factions by the conflicting demands made upon them by authority, Communist conscience, and socialist needs. Poets found their way out of these controversies with much more difficulty than the novelists. Complicated questions of form and poetics in general were stumbling blocks not easily surmounted by the young untrained peasant and proletarian poets who came to the fore. Unlike fiction, Soviet poetry, except for the works of a few first-rate artists, remained for an excessively long time in a transitional stage. In the struggle between rationalism and emotionalism, mere affirmation of faith unsupported by poetic convictions and imaginative vision led to a reiteration of banalities no less flat than those in the bourgeois verse these young Soviet poets so fiercely condemned.

The real early poet laureate of the Revolution was not Mayakovski, but Demyan Bedny, a "Bolshevik whose weapon is poetry," as Trotzky described him. Much of his verse (there are more than fifteen volumes of it) consists largely of satirical and humorous commentaries on daily events in Soviet life. A good deal of his poetry hardly rises above the level of doggerel, but the best of it has the authentic ring of genuine folk poetry.

The young writers most immediately influenced by Mayakovski liked to think of themselves as proletarian poets, although their connection with the working class was often tenuous indeed. They began to flourish after 1923, and by far the most popular of them for a time was A. I. Bezymen-

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ski. For all these younger proletarian poets, devotion to the Communist Party took precedence over devotion to the muse. In bombastic verse that had about as much musicality as a loud yawp, Bezymenski arrogantly dismissed the past—Dante was simply "that son of a bitch"—and geared his numbers to proletarian realities, as in one of his early works, "That's How Life Smells," (1924). As he gathered experience, the Party and political propaganda were used less ostentatiously as themes, and a growing realization of the sterner tasks confronting the socialist regime began to creep into his verse.

Among this group of proletarian poets, Alexander Zharov is a paler and duller disciple of Mayakovski; Nikolai Ushakov, in his "The Spring of the Republic," is authentically Mayakovskian but possesses a more lyric strain; and Mikhail Golodny (M. S. Epstein), Evan Doronin, and Mikhail Svetlov are less proletarian in their themes and more romantic in their treatment of them. A proletarian poet with a larger vision and richer talent than any of those already mentioned is Vasily Kazin.

In his "Poem About Love" (1932), Bezymenski has condemned Mayakovski's unsocial act of suicide, but Nikolai Aseyev honored the dead master's memory in his long narrative poem, "Mayakovski Begins" (1940). Aseyev, one of the early futurists and followers of Mayakovski, accepted the Revolution at its outset and is now regarded as one of the foremost Soviet poets.

An offshoot of futurism was constructivism, a vague movement dedicated to subordinating the imagery and vocabulary of poetry to the theme. The principal theoretician is Kornely Zelinski and the chief poet of the movement is Ilya Selvinski. Selvinski is a realist who stresses the social function of poetry, and in several long verse tales he often displays the art of the novelist as much as that of the poet, but he is quite capable of lyric flights. Another constructivist, although many influences worked upon him, was Eduard Bagritski (Dzyubin), who died young. Highly talented and with a particularly fine lyric gift, he wrote on a large variety of themes, many of them having no relation to the Revolution, though there can be no doubt about his sympathies.

Boris Pasternak, who began to write under the influence of the futurists, is generally regarded as the leading Soviet poet today. Essentially lyric, his attempts at long verse narratives, such as "Spektorski" (1926) and "The Year 1905" (1927), are not well sustained. Pasternak finds it difficult to identify his muse with political and socialistic themes, although he has tried on occasion. For he is primarily an individualist—a highly cultured one—, and a romantic, who writes with passionate intensity on the traditional subject of nature, which serves so often as a background for personal lyric utterances. His striking originality finds fullest expression in his language and in varied poetic forms. It is a difficult, elliptical, obscure language, with unorthodox syntactical turns, but the musical and rhythmical effects, built up on the intonations and cadences of ordinary speech, are wonderfully successful.

Pasternak's principal rival for top honors in Soviet poetry today is Nikolai Tikhonov, although this author possesses neither the same sheer poetic power nor equal originality. On the other hand, he is relatively free of the difficult language and complicated handling of themes that have prevented Pasternak from winning wide popularity. It is not easy to place Tikhonov in any particular poetic school, for from the time of his early narrative verse tales, "The Horde" (1922) and "Mead" (1923), to his later ballads on civil war themes and his recent poems, he has consistently and independently developed his art largely as a medium for treating romantic themes of revolution in a realistic manner.

It is clear that in its performance poetry in Soviet Russia has lagged behind fiction, as indeed in Western Europe and America over the last twenty years. The doubt, despair, and negation of so much of Western European verse, however, have been absent; Soviet poetry has even been characterized by exuberance and an almost excessive determination to mirror life, albeit a socialistic life. In its efforts to condemn a whole world of emotive complexes and values, Soviet poetry inevitably became a literature of fierce conflicts and action. But the constant, driving change of the new life, which was more easily assimilated by fiction, has proved a deterrent to the healthy growth of poetry, which requires periods at least of calm and contemplation. Most recent Soviet verse, however, bears a promise of greatness for the future; form is grasped with more sureness, and a clear vision of the Socialist State lends inspiration where doubt and conflict had formerly confused and enervated positive affirmation.

Mikhail Sholokhov

—*Preslit*

Ilya Ehrenburg

Soviet Drama

It has become a critical commonplace to observe that the Soviet theatre is perhaps the finest in the world but that a comparable dramatic literature has failed to materialize. Certainly the native repertoire has not kept pace with the outstanding development in the art of the theatre, yet on a comparative basis the whole corpus of Soviet plays written during the last twenty-five years is not markedly inferior to that of any nation in the West or of America.

As in all Soviet literature, the drama has also faithfully reflected the rapid political, social, and economic changes. The dramatists earliest upon the scene were mostly of the intelligentsia and in some cases had practised their art before the Revolution, such as A. N. Tolstoy, K. A. Trenev, N. Erdman, A. V. Lunacharski, B. S. Romashov, and S. M. Tretyakov. Futuristic, romantic, and realistic tendencies are apparent in their

(*Continued on page* 16)

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Kay Boyle's Coincidence and Melodrama

AVALANCHE; a Novel of Love and Espionage. By Kay Boyle. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1944. 209 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by STRUTHERS BURT

THIS book disarms criticism because of its setting and its theme and because toward the end there is something in it that must bring every American up full-standing, his heart in his throat. But then that is a stupid phrase, "disarms criticism," because it implies abeyance of objective standards, and that isn't what I mean at all. Not in this case. Indeed, I will state at once, that taken at its simplest valuation, this is one of the most exciting stories I have read in a long while, ranking, so far as I am concerned, along with "Rebecca" and "Escape." If it hasn't the careful and interwoven texture of both of these, the convincing psychological undercurrents, and, especially, as with the latter, the extraordinary analysis and convincingness of plot, it has on the other hand, well as those two books were written, Miss Boyle's beautiful and eerie command of language and sensitiveness toward scene and scenery, toward atmosphere of place and person, as if the finger-tips of her mind and spirit had been filed to an almost agonizing thinness. And so nothing that she writes can be taken at its "simplest valuation"; it is too important, actually and potentially.

Nor can it be dismissed easily or briefly for the same reason. Certain writers—a very few—are always "on trust." And I think the trouble with "Avalanche" is that Miss Boyle, breaking abruptly with her past, was too determined to accomplish a tour de force and as a result, misprizing her material, seized too readily upon shopworn ingredients and coincidences too perfectly synchronized, including a hero whose sense of timing is to say the least uncanny. And a person like Miss Boyle hasn't a right to do this.

Not that life isn't filled with coincidences. And the older you grow, the more you know it, perhaps because your own circle for possible coincidences widens. And God knows there are plenty of coincidences at present, incredible ones. But they don't seem to happen so invariably on the side of good. I wish they did. For the most part their arrangement is neither logical nor necessarily well-intended, and that's where the motion-pictures go wrong, and that's what makes the use of the word melodrama in a derogative sense legitimate.

Life, properly viewed, is just as melodramatic as it possibly can be, always subjectively, sometimes out in the open and on the surface, and at times like the present it is unashamedly and nakedly melodramatic, but the difference between melodrama, twisted to an author's ends, and life, is that indigenous melodrama does not, any more than coincidence, which is largely the stuff of which melodrama is made, work consciously to the advantage of better people. To the contrary, both it and coincidence seem to have an entirely cold and aloof attitude toward the morals of the case, and like rain, to fall equally upon the just and the unjust. Too often the heroine, tied in the grove of a buzz-saw, is cut in half.

In only one plane of human conduct, so far as I can make out, do coincidence and melodrama, like some sleepy and indifferent gods, suddenly roused to indignation and closeness, take a culminating and determining course as if directed by an observing intelligence, and that is when the weak, the wicked, or the desperate behave in such a notorious fashion that neither life nor their fellow-men can stand them any longer. The Greeks knew about this, and they called the form of it tragedy, and the conclusion, nemesis.

I would like to continue the discussion of nemesis, but it would not be fair to Miss Boyle's story, satisfactory as the end of her well-concealed villain is. However, I wonder if even a Gestapo agent walks so obstinately and with such wide-eyed innocence toward what anyone could tell him is sure death. I know they are violently and cosmically stupid, Gestapo agents and the nation from which they come, for all their initial detailed shrewdness. That has been proven, and never in history has there been a clearer case of nemesis than the vast and bloody downfall now happening, too much mixed up with pretensions and thick skulls even to be a dignified Götterdämmerung. And their's is an inherent stupidity, too, so colossal that it causes men to try to walk across volcanoes because they think they are superior to fire, or across water because they think they are superior to water. And so death, horrible and contemptuous, overtakes them, and you laugh even as you retch. But I wonder if individually, for all their inhuman vanity, they haven't more simple self-protectiveness.

—*Louise Dahl Wolfe*

Kay Boyle

All of this, however, is really not so important, for the real importance is that a number of Miss Boyle's admirers, unless I am mistaken, are going to rebuke her for this story, and although they are going to be right technically, they are going to be enormously wrong theoretically and practically. I hope Miss Boyle is engaged in a serious pursuit. She might even start a much needed revolution. Nobody could do it with more authority than she. But first of all she will have to reconsider the worthiness and dignity of plot.

The view from a single window is of great import and interest, depending of course upon the import and interest of the person looking out. But, anyway, the sum total of the views from single windows adds up to something worthwhile. However, eventually even the most searching gazer should go down in the street and look up, not down, and along, not across. For a number of years American writing has suffered from magnificent emotion and a sort of demonaic, centripetal concentration upon self, a sort of national narcissism, just as formerly American writing suffered from all plot and no emotion. But the point is that great novels have always had a plot; and many of them most exciting plots. So now maybe it might be a good idea for first-class American writers to try to combine the two.

But once more, Miss Boyle disarms criticism, at least where I am concerned, for never in my life have I come across such descriptions of mountains. Never. Not even in that totally different book, "Primer for Combat." And I say this as a mountain-man. Her sentences about mountains go up and up to snow-peaked beauty almost unbearable, just as great mountains do, or swoop down like glaciers and snowfields, or are close and warming and exciting like snow in a village. Never have there been such descriptions of mountains.

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The Children of Adversity

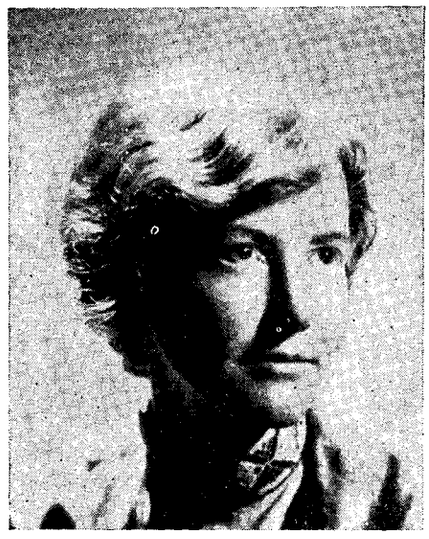
THE SIGNPOST. By E. Arnot Robertson. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1944. 240 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by R. ELLIS ROBERTS

IT'S a brutal thing to reveal in a few blunt words the story of "The Signpost": yet, if I do not, it will be hard for a critic who calls "home" the two countries of which Miss Robertson writes, England and Ireland, to explain the impact made on him by this pitiful, brilliant, ironic, sardonic novel. "The Signpost" is a story of broken and restored faith, and I am not sure how far Miss Robertson herself, writing at white heat of the tragic autumn of the first blitz over London in 1940, appreciates the implications of her own alarming fable.

Tom Fairburn is in the R.A.F. He flies a bomber. His parents live in County Cork, but neither he nor they are Irish. Denyse Messagère is a Frenchwoman who has escaped from France after the fall, leaving behind her a daughter and a husband. Tom has, before the story opens, had one bad attack of war strain: he is now suffering from a second, caused by his own dreadful meditations on his successful bombing of a chemical plant and the sight of the fire devouring it and the helpless workers—"Dutchmen or Czechs or Poles, possibly, among the Germans." He has leave for convalescence; and goes to Ireland, to Donegal, to recuperate. On the boat he meets Denyse; and with the sensitiveness of the sick in mind, recognizes another wounded creature; in what way Denyse is wounded he does not learn until later, when the two are lovers passing as man and wife in the lovely, kindly, chattering village of Kildooey.

They are both—Tom and Denyse—very ordinary people whom the extraordinary has overwhelmed with terrific force and thrown off balance. Denyse has been educated in England, sent there to school by a widowed father who has become a Roman Catholic priest. She has been happily married to a fellow countryman, a banker, who shared to the full the Maginot temper which characterized the "important" people in France. Money is hers and position and an intelligent curiosity: but so little real intelligence that, even in 1940, after the fall of France, she could say, "It was the best period of my life, actually, the three or four years before Munich." With Munich, however, and the great betrayal, Denyse becomes passionately aware of the danger threatening her values, values felt only rather than understood: and she has taken a knockout blow when, with the fall of



E. Arnot-Robertson

France, she discovers that her husband is prepared to collaborate with the Germans, has no intention, in spite of earlier brave words, of continuing to fight against the foe.

So these two—Tom has been a civil engineer before the war and an enthusiast for gliding—meet and love—instinctively, bodily. Miss Robertson, delicate and reserved as she is, makes no bones about the beginning of the liaison. But I wonder whether it is conscious irony which prevents her from ever hinting that Denyse, in her infidelity, has but reflected, on a different level, the unfaithfulness of Paul Messagère to his country?

This weakness in her character and in Tom's leads to a tragedy in the little village where they find, at others' expense, a fortnight of peace and consolation. There are no words strong enough to praise the picture here painted of Kildooey. Anyone who knows that savage Donegal coast and its kindly, hospitable people will be smitten with a heartbreaking nostalgia for that soft climate, that rigorous living, that keen and witty conduct of everyday affairs. The whole society, except Father Keith, the parish priest, are portrayed with an assurance, a humor, a justice which compel admiration. Aunt Mary Sullivan, with her natural, country humor is admirable. Here are two snatched examples of her talk. Aunt Mary chokes on a fish-bone. Recovered, she exclaims:

> Wouldn't you think that a creature living in the sea would be needing all its available agility? And not go cluttering up its body with loose bones?

Or again:

> Some women are more concerned with motherhood than others. I mean they give themselves over to it, and relish even the nastiness for its own sake. In fact, if himself will not mind the mention of the thing, there are women that take the diaper as others take the veil.

The whole Sullivan clan are shown here as if painted by Breughel, only their peasant vehemence veiled by the Irish rain and the kind Irish sunlight. Masterly, too, is the portrait of Sean, the impenitent Republican who still drills in the bogs with a rusty rifle, and is prepared to fight either the English, the Ulstermen, or the Germans. Sean is in love with Bridie, the keen, eager child who is fascinated by the foreign visitors; and he is, in a sullen way, jealous of her interest in them and their affection for her. He fears that she may ache to leave Kildooey, following the signposted road that leads to Dublin, and from Dublin, perhaps, to America from which the desolate and disappointed Helen has returned to marry Michael, at the bidding of the parish priest, Father Keith.

I think Miss Robertson has failed in her portrayal of the priest. You cannot exaggerate the Puritanism of Irish Catholicism—Miss Robertson accepts Bernard Shaw's too easy explanation and ascribes it to lack of nourishment—but I doubt if Father Keith would have shown either the tolerance or the bigotry she attributes to him. Still he is made an appealing figure: and stands out in fine contrast to Wellace, the gombeen man who keeps the people despondently in his debt.

"The Signpost" is certainly one of the best novels to come out of England since the war. It is as free from false sentiment as it is from false heroics; if it displays, in its chief characters, an invalid and interim morality, it may easily be true to the less intelligent men and women on whom disaster nearly fell in 1940, and who met it with a dauntless courage. But these children of adversity, in their sickness, find relief in a society based on the Christian standards they despise; and the sudden accidental death of Bridie is in a dreadful way the only gift their brief passage can make to Kildooey.

The Book Clinic of the American Institute of Graphic Arts has named these books as its January selections: "Abraham Lincoln," by James Daugherty (Viking); "A Literary Journey through War-Time Britain," by A. C. Ward (Oxford University Press); "A Soldier's Reader and A Sailor's Reader," edited by George Macy (Heritage Press); "Great American Paintings," edited by John Walker and Maggill James (Oxford); "My Favorite Assassin," by George Herald (Vanguard); "Part of a Lifetime," by Lee Simonson (Duell, Sloan & Pearce); "Tchaikovsky," by Herbert Weinstock (Knopf).

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Three Sides to the Race Problem

RACE AND RUMORS OF RACE. By Howard W. Odum. Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press. 1943. 245 pp. $2.

Reviewed by HAL BORLAND

YOU'VE undoubtedly heard that America is on the verge of civil war. If you have listened to the right persons, or read the right journals, you must have heard it, must have been told that perhaps even before we win the two foreign wars we are going to have a race war on our hands here at home. Or if you haven't been told that one, you surely have been assured that immediately after the foreign wars are won we will face armed conflict here over the race question. The Negroes, your informants must have told you, are going to rise up and claim a new place in the sun. Depending on your informant, this will be the beginning of a social millenium, or it will be the showdown battle for racial supremacy and even survival. So you'd better grab either a soap box or a sawed-off shotgun and get ready for action.

Of, if you are a sensible person, you can read Howard W. Odum's book and sift out rumor from fact and get an idea of the truth of the situation. You probably won't agree with everything Professor Odum says, and it doesn't matter whether you are from the North or the South. You will probably weary of Professor Odum's interminable pages of questions and wish he would get down to positive statements. But when you have finished his book you surely will realize that the situation is critical, that most of the rumors are false, that agitation cannot solve the problems, and that change is inevitable—change, not war. If you are a reasonable person, this book will give you new understanding. That was Professor Odum's purpose.

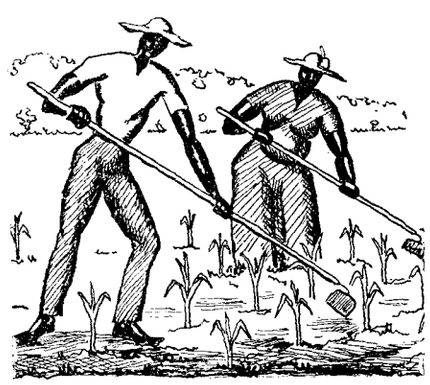
The book is divided into four parts. The first section deals with the crisis as it has risen, the conditions behind it, and the changes that accelerated its growth. The second section takes up the whole spectrum of rumors and weighs them against ascertainable fact. The third section deals with what is being done about the situation and what can be done and should be done. The last section is a self-criticism of the whole study.

The first section will probably stir the most argument, though the third section also will be hotly debated. Professor Odum, who is Kenan Professor of Sociology and Director of the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina, knows a good deal more about the Negro problem in the South than do most of the agitators. He doesn't get emotional about it; he is looking for truth. Yet his findings probably will please neither side.

He points out that change was in the wind well before the war, that war conditions speeded it up, and that the result is today's critical situation. He finds three major groups sharply at odds: the Negroes, who "not only had the right and knew they had the right" of better opportunity, but they had been led to believe that this right would be forthcoming; the North, "reflecting primarily the white race," who knew that America was coming to the doctrine of equal opportunity and believed in the efficacy of "reform"; and the "White South," which believed in evolutionary change and vigorously objected to outside coercion. Each group, he points out, had some degree of right on its side, and each was wrong to some degree. The problem, obviously, is to bring all three groups together in understanding.

The South has its folkways, of which a major item is belief in biracial culture. The South remembers the Carpetbagger days, though Professor Odum does not emphasize the point; and those who, with far more heat than light, demand immediate federal action to put an end to discrimination of every kind, might gain considerable understanding if they would read the history of the early years of Reconstruction. The South wants no repetition of that era. Nor, for that matter, do the more realistic Negro leaders.

And when one appraises the great body of rumor which Professor Odum presents—rumors of great Negro arsenals, of "Eleanor Clubs," of secret lynchings, of gang riots, of secret societies plotting revolt—one can see the Southern fears which have an understandable basis in the past. This is the first time this reviewer has seen this rumor-mass presented fully, and it seems a worthwhile presentation. Rumor thrives best in darkness, and Professor Odum has not only hauled it out into the light but he has shown how false much of it is. Rumors will continue, of course, but for those who wish to appraise them, here is the basic material for judgment.



—From the drawing by Alexander Key

Professor Odum also does a service to those who would know the truth by pointing to the sincere work that has been done in the South, by whites and Negroes working together in search of workable solutions for the fundamental problems. He has no positive solution, no cure-all; but he returns repeatedly to understanding as the basis for any workable program.

Too much of the fiery agitation for federal controls and for immediate change has come from professional agitators who scream at the South as an arch-criminal in the situation while quite ignoring the attitude of labor unions in the North, of Northern landlords who fatten on Negro slums, and of politicians who have been using double-talk every time they touched the Negro problem. Mr. Odum barely touches these points, but anyone who reads the reliable press must know how important they are.

The conclusion, after reading this volume, seems to be that the problem is acute, that irresponsible agitation can make it flare into flames, that there is a good deal to be said on both sides, that responsible leaders on both sides are seriously trying to solve it by sensible means, that change is inevitable, and that unless understanding overrides emotion there will be tragic consequences.

There always have been fire-eaters and breast-beaters, and they have sometimes hastened necessary reform; at other times they have ranted us into tragic troubles which ended with the situation no better than before. There always have been die-hard traditionalists, who resisted every change, and at times they have blocked change until they were completely overwhelmed. And, fortunately, there always have been men and women of understanding, who sometimes prevailed and often led us by peaceful means to that change that advanced the lot of everyone. If we are to solve this problem of race in the way it should be solved, it is those people of understanding who must lead. And they can learn much, if they will, from Professor Odum's survey. It is not the last word, and it is often annoying in its form, but it has the particular virtue of honest search for light. It could be the basis for the program which will bring us the solution to one of the bitterest disputes now smouldering on the home front.

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Wall of Steel or Sand?

BEHIND THE STEEL WALL. By Arvid Fredborg. New York: The Viking Press. 1944. 305 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by KONRAD HEIDEN

WHEN Hitler planned his attack on Russia, he first considered a plan of campaign entirely different from the one he picked later. The plan was submitted to him by General Marcks, little known today outside Germany, and better known as Captain or Major Marcks to people who knew that country before Hitler. According to General Marcks's plan the German main force was to assemble in Rumania and make a powerful thrust along the northern shore of the Black Sea toward the Volga and the fabulous Caucasian oil—not necessarily in order to reach a quick military decision, but to cut off Russia from the economic sources of her strength. The idea was to strangle the enemy.

But Hitler suddenly decided that he had a chance for a better, easier, and quicker victory: namely, to destroy completely, in one big blow, the bulk of the Russian army which he supposed was close to the border farther up in the North. He, therefore, attacked in the North—but the bulk of the Russian army was not there, and the rest is common knowledge.

This story was told by an "expert" to Arvid Fredborg, the young Swedish journalist, who in turn has told it in a highly interesting book. Eighteen months later there was a very different story. It was the Stalingrad winter for Germany. This time not a general, but "one of the highest party men," developed the plan to "let the Russians enter Europe on a broad front"; Hitler "would naturally disappear," but "the Leftists within the party, led by Goebbels, would go over to Stalin," . . . and so on. Mr. Fredborg admits that he was genuinely worried about the idea, for "the more one contemplated it, the more likely it appeared"; but after considerable pondering he came to the conclusion that "perhaps the whole thing was a bluff to scare the conservatives in Germany."

It certainly will be hard for an observer, foreign or otherwise, to find his way between the many bluffs which must be shot at him from all sides. Though the author believes that foreign correspondents in Berlin "usually obtain a fairly clear picture of actual events," he tells stories like the one mentioned above somewhat reluctantly, never quite sure whether somebody is not selling him on a formidable ballyhoo. However, for a shrewd observer the mediocrity and incompetence of many of the so-called Nazi spokesmen sometimes can be extremely helpful. True, Mr. Fredborg, who was a correspondent for a well-esteemed Swedish newspaper, *Svenska Dagbladet,* does not seem to have contacted many of the Nazi big shots who would have been in his line—*e.g.,* Hitler's "press chief Otto Dietrich, a perfect idiot, by the way." But the lesser lights also often confirmed the old truth that the efficiency of the Nazi machine lies in its organization and not in the quality of its human cogs. The man in the Propaganda Ministry who had to hand him his news could not "understand that a journalist regards news as something to be written today instead of tomorrow." It is from dealing with such people, listening to the overtones in their talks, registering their reactions, sometimes getting into their confidence, that Mr. Fredborg develops a convincing picture not so much of the German situation—nobody could—but of the German atmosphere.

That Germany has lost the war is a foregone conclusion to the author—but at what time did the Germans realize it? At a surprisingly early moment, according to Mr. Fredborg. The first doubts, he thinks, began to creep in as early as the Fall, 1941, when the Russian campaign did not bring a quick victory—although at that time Hitler, through his mouthpiece Dietrich, announced that very victory: "The war in the East is practically over." This world-shaking announcement "left the Berliners completely unmoved," for "deep down inside themselves they no longer believed in the slogans of victory." When at the same time Goebbels tried a diversion and the wearing of the Star of David was made compulsory for all Jews, there were demonstrations in favor of the Jews.

Certainly, at that time people were not yet in fear of a possible invasion; but when some months later Germany declared war on America "many persons had dire forebodings and began talking about the First World War. . . . Even the greatest optimists among them were forced to realize that the final outcome was doubtful."

The bad news became more frequent, the good news more and more rare, and in Spring, 1942 "morale had perceptibly deteriorated." Today there stands an innocent-looking stone hut in the Wittenberg Platz in Berlin—and on many other squares in Germany; but you know that this is a machine-gun nest, ready for the day of revolt. Mr. Fredborg does not believe in revolt, although he is sure of the numerical strength of the opposition, among which he counts Social Democrats and Communists as the strongest. However, armed insurrection—although according to him, the opposition has some arms—is impossible for many reasons; the most important a psychlogical one: "The Allies," says Mr. Fredborg, "have, as a matter of fact, given the German people no alternative except unconditional surrender. It is difficult to make a people accept such an outcome before a military catastrophe. Actually this situation and Germany's enemies are whipping Germans together under the Swastika."

—*London Daily Express*
Arvid Fredborg

As a conscientious observer who makes no hazardous guesses, Mr. Fredborg insists that Germany is not yet beaten, although she will be. Leading Nazis, he says, think that they are in a situation similar to Frederick the Great of Prussia's in the sixth year of the Seven Years War, when the outlook was desperate, only to be reversed almost completely in a few months by fortunate events. A separate peace with Russia—the book was written in the Fall of 1943, before Moscow and Teheran—did not seem out of the question. The German army, according to the author, comprised at that time about 10,800,000 men, but only half of them front formations. He does not dismiss completely the chances of a new "secret weapon"; he even claims that such a weapon has been in use for a short time, but did not work out too well. The Germans called it "Atom Gun"—a gun firing a shell with an incredibly high explosive, tearing everything literally to "atoms." But it seems that the atom

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gun was almost as dangerous to the men who fired it as to the enemy, and after a try-out in the Crimea it disappeared from the picture.

Mr. Fredborg has his ideas about a future peace, too—although the value of the whole book does not lie in its ideas. He advocates a future Europe "organized on a monarchical basis." He hopes that the Americans will "realize that Europe cannot be changed into an imitation of America"—an old and common European fear, but, as it seems to this reviewer, not too well founded. He does not say so, but he evidently is frightened by the specter of Bolshevism—under whatever form the old Russian specter may appear after this war. But finding the facts of the present was such a hard—and of course not perfectly successful job—that the author prefers to take no risks about the facts of the future. He is a sober, modest seeker for truth who does not claim to be a prophet. Rara avis.

Chapelle

By William Rose Benét

By The Associated Press.

ALGIERS, Dec. 26—Many high officials of the French Committee of National Liberation and de Gaullists paid silent tribute today at the tomb of the young university student who assassinated Admiral François Darlan on Dec. 24, 1942.

THE rain fell. True Frenchmen stood in the rain.
The weather wept. They laid the wreath on the tomb.
They held the silence. They remembered the doom
Of the despicable; the vengeance not in vain
By the young hand, to erase the dark stain
On the shield of Truth. Aye, him they could not restrain
With their false parley, taking the hand of shame!
Fernard Eugene Bonnier—a patriot name
To ring through France—the tried and sentenced and slain . . .
Rain laurel then, rain the French lilies in bloom!

Red rain on the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne, the Rhone;
Rain on Versailles and Vaux, Sceaux and Saint Cloud;
But a rainbow too; and the hot sun shining through;
And cock-crow—for all Gaul the bugle blown,
For the poor and wretched, the betrayed and unmanned,
By the Hun plundered, by "expedience" of war
Outraged—O, for the People of France, and for
Their future world, that was wrested from their hand!

"Odious" we said, and "cowardly" we said,
In the smooth and plenipotentiary halls
Where compromise crawls like a slime upon the walls
And all were eager to defame the dead
While exalting the betrayer, the two-faced man,
The polite delinquent, the Admiral Darlan,
When by a student's hand, *your* hand, he fell,
Fernard Eugene Bonnier de la Chapelle.
But your name goes over France like a burning brand,
Your name goes over France like a flying flame,
Whom the rolling volley felled in the day of our shame
When we sneered at Loyalist and at Partisan,—
Sirocco of Africa—wind of your name!

Underground they gather, and underground
They know the Truth—know the black factions—know
Laval, Déat, Bucard, and Doriot,
The paid prefect, the active traitor, the whipped hound;
Know how the foe will scar and scorch the ground,
The sacred soil of France, in full retreat;
Know how all patriots will be mown like wheat.
One thing they do not know, and that's "Defeat"!
Armies out of the earth they will rise, they will cry,
"Chapelle!" to the burning sky, to the thundering sky,
When from the West and the East, ally with ally
Storms their prison and dashes into the sea
The hordes of blood. O what a rallying-cry,
What a trumpet for Truth, what a light for all the Free,
In that great day, Fernard, your name shall be!

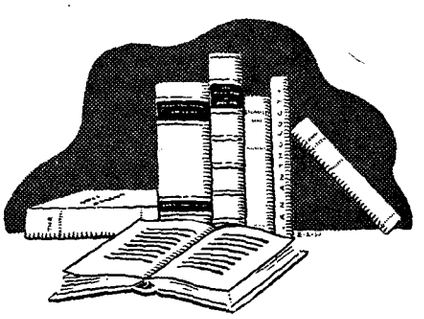
Spies and Stuff

THE TWO MRS. ABBOTTS. By D. E. Stevenson. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1943 282 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH

THIS is one of those novels that some readers will like very much while others will toss it aside after a chapter or two in bored wonder that anyone should have the time or desire to write anything so inconsequential and so tranquilly dull. The fair-minded reviewer therefore can only give you a hint of what it is about and leave the decision to you. "The Two Mrs. Abbotts" is the latest of a series Miss Stevenson has written all about a certain Miss Buncle and her friends. Miss Buncle, however, married her publisher a book or two back and is now one of the Mrs. Abbotts. The second is Jerry, the wife of her husband's nephew now in the African campaign. The two young women are great friends, both with many admirers, both with old English houses which they manage without servants with that blithe gaiety we have become so used to in English war-time novels. Jerry is helped by her half-deaf ex-governess, Markie, who reads anthropolgy, quotes the classics, or cooks and dusts with equal efficiency—in short quite a "character."

The high point of the story is when Markie, like Mrs. Miniver, finds a German spy asleep under a tree and steals his revolver. Other characters are a young and pretty writer of "high power tushery" who disguises herself by cutting her hair, dressing in mannish clothes, and changing her name in order to escape from her books and to live with Jerry and Markie long enough to fall in love with Jerry's rich farmer brother, two precocious children, an old Colonel and his beautiful daughter, a foolish young officer in love with a tart. They go to a bazaar, drink lots of tea, and ride horses. All as familiar and as English as brussels sprouts. There is nothing here to disturb you. To charm you—if it does—is Miss Stevenson's gentle humor. You will find "The Two Mrs. Abbotts" relaxing bed-reading after a tense, high-blood-pressureish day.



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Worth Doing Badly

CARTOON CAVALCADE. Edited by Thomas Craven. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1943. 450 *pp.* $3.95.

Reviewed by LOVELL THOMPSON

IF a thing is worth doing it's worth doing well. Don't do it if you can't do it well. So by easy stages the perfectionist finds the excuse for inaction. I have heard the proverb put another way, and in its revised form it seems to me still wiser,—if a thing is worth doing it's worth doing badly. "Cartoon Cavalcade" was worth doing badly. And that is just how it has been done. If everyone concerned with the making of the book had waited until it was well and truly done, we would probably never have had it.

Many people will have received "Cartoon Cavalcade" for Christmas. Everyone of them will have enjoyed it tremendously. The book induces an agreeable and profitable reverie about fashions in humor and their cause. It broadens one's view of comedy. Its rather monumental shortcomings are unimportant except as they serve as an excuse for further thinking and further talk.

The pictures in "Cartoon Cavalcade" are many and many of them are amusing. The book is divided into three parts and each part has an introduction of a few thousand words. To this introduction the reader turns in search of the key to the strange sequence of humor and technique which he finds in the pictures. The reader turns in vain. The publishers in their blurb on the jacket accurately state the case for the editorial accompaniment which Thomas Craven gives the book. It is, they say, "just lucid, gay, and civilized talk about the cartoons and cartoonists." This is *just* what it is. But apart from a profoundly perceptive passage on Krazy Kat (which rather dates the editor) the book is without consideration of what animates the animated cartoonist or any other.

Suppose, for example, that the editor had chosen to gather the comic strips together in one section or in several parallel sections. Then we might have beheld the whole progress of comics from the Yellow Kid to Superman. The comics have never been very comic, but in the days of Buster Brown they were petty domestic tragedies, today they are super-success stories. The kids raised on Buster Brown fought the First World War and helped to make the second—the kids raised on Superman have already started a wave of juvenile delinquency. Is there any relation? What forces have made the child retreat from the sad reality of Buster Brown to the dream world of Superman?

Comics have followed the development of all art in lines as broad and simple as the lines of the cartoons themselves. They have progressed from crudity of technique to true sophistication and back now to an artificial archaic quality. If the comic strips had been properly covered by a man who hadn't given them up along with cornsilk in his pipe, what a panorama and what a commentary we might have had.

All political cartoons are ruled out in the latter part of the book on the flimsy ground that they do not amuse the editor. Thus, much that is good, funny, and very American is omitted from the book. There might have been a provocative attempt to watch our political conscience at work—to watch its retrogression from principles to personalities, to watch the development of such abstractions as old man prohibition, invented by Keppler who is omitted altogether from the book, or the fusty bumpkinish little man who has come to represent Congress. It is an image which signifies a huge, tolerant affection on the part of the nation for that oddly assorted group of character parts which we call the legislative branch. The real picture of the American political conscience is missing. Mr. Craven does not seem to understand that if you give a man the canvas and some of the paint, it is not quite the same thing as painting his portrait.

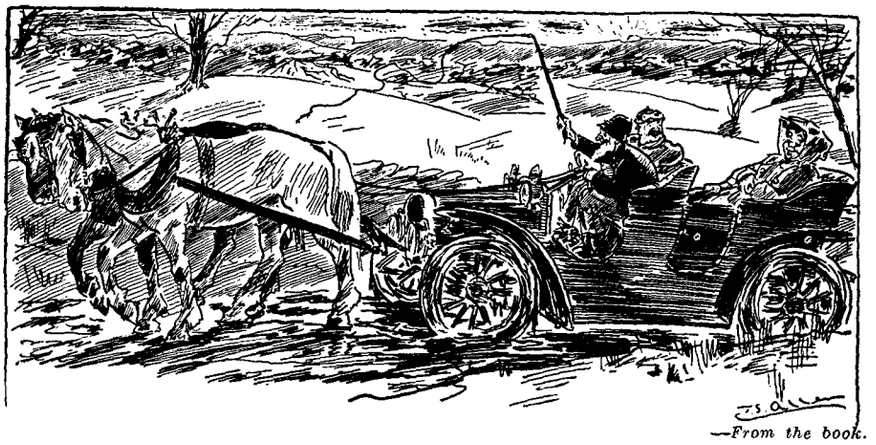
Most of the book is made up of "social" cartoons. That is, cartoons which comment in a general way on society. Here, perhaps, lay Mr. Craven's biggest chance. We are apt to laugh at the things we secretly fear, and much of "Cartoon Cavalcade" is a catalogue of our suppressed worries. You can watch us move from the Gibson era primarily concerned with problems which Emily Post could settle, to the earlier *New Yorker* whose jokes are nuts for Freud to crack. And finally, from the sex of the thirties to the sadism of the forties which expresses a fear which only the makers of the post-war world can handle.

Mr. Craven thinks we are a clean, fun-loving nation in our jokes and produces *La Vie Parisienne* to prove it—as compared to the English he thinks we have a gift for overstatement, they for understatement; so much for the nation which has been famous for understatement from "you may fire when ready, Gridley" to "sighted sub sank same." Or to use one of Mr. Craven's own cartoons against him, consider the Charles Adaams picture in which a gorilla carries off a resisting matron while her sister comments, "I really don't see what he sees in her."

As you think over the book it seems as if the identifying characteristic of American humor might be a kind of exaggerated ingenuity such as you would expect from the nation of the Connecticut Yankee, plus something of a gift for the non-sequitur and a tendency to be deadly serious. It also seems as if the editor, like Mr. Thurber's hero, knew all about art and not enough about what he and all the rest of us really like.

Just how Mr. Craven, who seems so much too urbane for his task, came by his beautiful understanding of Krazy Kat, the recipient of brick bats, I do not understand. It shakes me in my harsh judgment of him. The reviewer's hand which holds another brick bat falters. However he came by that understanding, it is a pure and beautiful thing, and I love him for it.

FOR VICTORY
BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS



—*From the book.*

One of the earliest of the straight "gag" cartoons by T. S. Allen: "Do you know, John, this is the first time I've really enjoyed riding in this thing since you got it?"

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HEROISM

THAT which takes my fancy most in the heroic class is the good-humor and hilarity they exhibit. It is a height to which common duty can very well attain, to suffer and to dare with solemnity. But these rare souls set opinion, success, and life at so cheap a rate that they will not soothe their enemies by petitions, or the show of sorrow, but wear their own habitual greatness.

The great will not condescend to take anything seriously; all must be as gay as the song of a canary, though it were the building of cities or the eradication of old and foolish churches and nations which have cumbered the earth long thousands of years. Simple hearts put all the history and customs of this world behind them, and play their own game in innocent defiance of the Blue Laws of the world; and such would appear, could we see the human race assembled in vision, like little children frolicking together, though to the eyes of mankind at large they wear a stately and solemn garb of works and influences.

The interest these fine stories have for us, the power of a romance over the boy who grasps the forbidden book under his bench at school, our delight in the hero, is the main fact to our purpose. All these great and transcendent properties are ours. Where the heart is, there the muses, there the gods sojourn, and not in any geography of fame. Massachusetts, Connecticut River, and Boston Bay you think paltry places, and the ear loves names of foreign and classic topography. But here we are; and, if we will tarry a little, we may come to learn that here is best. See to it only that thyself is here, and art and nature, hope and fate, friends, angels, and the Supreme Being shall not be absent from the chamber where thou sittest. Epaminondas, brave and affectionate, does not seem to us to need Olympus to die upon, nor the Syrian sunshine. He lies very well where he is. The Jerseys were handsome ground enough for Washington to tread, and London streets for the feet of Milton. A great man makes his climate genial in the imagination of men, and its air the beloved element of all delicate spirits. That country is the fairest which is inhabited by the noblest minds.

The characteristic of heroism is its persistency. All men have wandering impulses, fits and starts of generosity. But when you have chosen your part, abide by it, and do not weakly try to reconcile yourself with the world. The heroic cannot be the common, nor the common the heroic. Yet we have the weakness to expect the sympathy of people in those actions whose excellence is that they outrun sympathy and appeal to a tardy justice. If you would serve your brother, because it is fit for you to serve him, do not take back your words when you find that prudent people do not commend you. Adhere to your own act, and congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant and broken the monotony of a decorous age. It was a high counsel that I once heard given to a young person—"Always do what you are afraid to do." A simple, manly character need never make an apology.

To speak the truth, even with some austerity, to live with some rigor of temperance, or some extremes of generosity, seems to be an ascetism which common good-nature would appoint to those who are at ease and in plenty, in sign that they feel a brotherhood with the great multitude of suffering men.

Times of heroism are generally times of terror, but the day never shines in which this element may not work. The circumstances of man, we say, are historically somewhat better in this country and at this hour than perhaps ever before. More freedom exists for culture. It will not now run against an axe at the first step out of the beaten track of opinion. But whoso is heroic will always find crises to try his edge. Human virtue demands her champions and martyrs, and the trial of persecution always proceeds.

I see not any road of perfect peace which a man can walk, but after the counsel of his own bosom. The unremitting retention of simple and high sentiments in obscure duties is hardening the character to that temper which will work with honor, if need be in the tumult, or on the scaffold.

The author of this week's guest editorial is Ralph Waldo Emerson. The essay from which these passages are drawn was first published in 1841 under the same title.

The Ballad of the Golden Bowl

By Sara Henderson Hay

"And they brought Him gifts of gold, and frankinsense, and myrrh. . . ."

"WHAT is this golden bowl, mother,
With its strange design?
It is not like our other things,
But foreign, and fine. . . ."

"It came out of the east, child,
A long time ago.
Your grandmother gave it to us.
This is all we know:

When your father's brother was born
On a winter's night,
A new star stood in the skies—
It was a great sight—

And three kings came from afar
To kneel at his bed.
They were seeking a greater King,
Or so they said. . . ."

"And was he a king, mother,
My father's kin?"
"No, child, it was all a mistake.
It must have been. . . .

For they went away, those three,
And they came no more.
And he had a sad life, child,
He died poor."

"Had he a wife, mother,
And a boy of his own?"
"He had neither chick nor child, darling,
He was all alone.

He was a good man,
But he came to grief.
And they hanged him on a cross
Like a common thief."

"But why, mother, why,
If he was kind and good?"
"It was a plot of some sort, child,
We never understood. . . .

There was nothing we could do,
Being humble folk.
He was your grandmother's favorite—
Her heart broke.

She gave us this golden bowl
When she came to die.
It is sad—it is all we have
To remember him by. . . ."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Search for Wimsey

SIR: Bernice Green's letter on the whereabouts of Lord Peter Wimsey must have interested a lot of Sayers fans besides myself. For them as well as for her I send the following meagre data, all that I could unearth. First, to answer the question, "Are there any Wimsey stories of which I'm ignorant?" In the Mercury Mysteries (25c) there is "Hangman's Holiday," ten stories originally published in 1933 but new to me. Only four concern Wimsey, but they are worth the quarter, and then you have the Montague Egg stories thrown in.

But for a proper full-length book there seems no hope. Some one who had seen Dorothy Sayers during the first part of the war told me that she had said she couldn't go on writing detective stories at such a time. Since then she has published "Begin Here; A Statement of Faith," "Mind of the Maker," and several war pamphlets. However, before Lord Peter dropped completely from sight, there was a spirited correspondence in the *London Spectator* called "Wimsey Papers (being the war time letters and documents of the Wimsey family)."

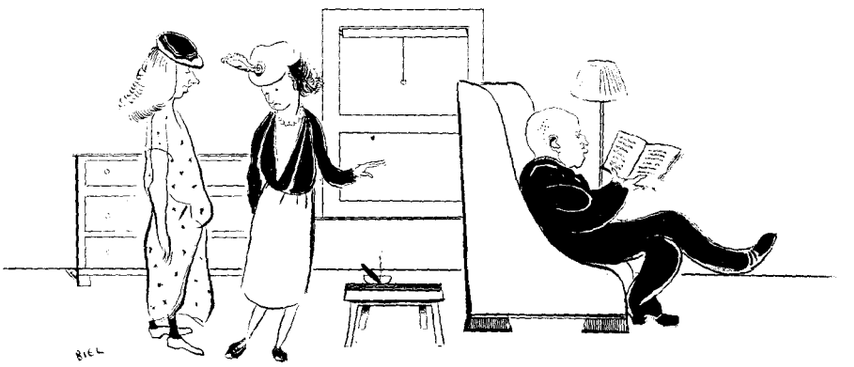
Wimsey in the Army was not a good guess. His mother writes: "Talking of Peter, I can't really tell you where he is, because he's gone back to his old job, and everything comes without any proper address through the Foreign Office. I rather fancy he may have been in Turkey a little while ago, from something he said about the coffee being good; I can't think of any other place where that would be likely to happen. . . . Wherever it was, he isn't there now, and that makes me think it *must* have been Turkey, because they seem to have settled everything splendidly there. . . . Harriet has gone down to Tallboys with the children—I enclose a photograph of little Paul, he's nearly a year old now, and Bredon just three, how time flies!"

HELEN R. GALLAND.
Brooklyn, N. Y.

The Incurable Controversy

SIR: I have decided to take no part in the revived "Incurable Controversy" except in those cases where the letter you publish contains slanderous and inaccurate attacks upon me personally. Since this is the case with the letter of Mr. W. L. Keene in your issue of December 18th, I shall reply to his onslaught.

The occasion to which he refers is very clear in my mind. It was a gathering of the faculty of the Eastern State College of Kentucky at Richmond, which met at the home of President Herman Donovan just before I was about to start a series of lectures there.



"Ask him whether it's a good book."
"He wouldn't know. All he is interested in are the typographical errors."

Since this was just on the heels of Dunkirk and the fall of France the faculty plied me with questions about what was going to happen next. I disclaimed any divine revelations, but said that if Hitler threw all he had against Britain at once he would probably occupy the British Isles by Labor Day. Since that time, statements by Winston Churchill and other responsible British leaders have made my prediction a qualified entry for the "Department of Understatement" in *The New Yorker*. The British admit that Hitler could have moved in virtually unopposed in July, 1940.

I was asked what kind of system Hitler would set up in Europe if he were victorious. I replied that it would probably be a regime of "bread and circuses," a common description of the Fascist social economy which has been widely used by the most fiercely anti-Fascist writers. I went to some pains to point out that, being an extreme libertarian, such a system is especially repugnant to me.

As to the jack-knife analogy, I do not recall making any such statement, but in case I did I would have no apology for it. With Hitler in occupation of the British Isles and victorious in Europe, no American Navy would have made much headway in trying to dislodge him.

The only bold and unqualified prediction I made that evening was that, if Hitler attacked Russia, he would have the fight of his life on his hands, with no assurance of ultimate victory. For this statement I was regarded as somewhat less than moronic, all but imbecilic, in my intelligence level.

With respect to the extent of participation in war as a test of warlike tendencies, I would like to quote from the lead article in *The Progressive* of December 20, 1943, by President Felix Morley of Haverford College: "The only objective test of whether a nation is 'peace loving' is afforded by an analysis of the number of wars in which, over a period of time, its government has become engaged." Like me, he proceeds to quote Quincy Wright to the effect that England has been the most frequent participant in war since the close of the Middle Ages. If my criterion of "warlikeness" is cockeyed, I am at least happy to be in such distinguished company.

HARRY E. BARNES.
Cooperstown, N. Y.

Britain's Colonial Policy

SIR: I read *The Saturday Review of Literature* and appreciate the frank, fearless, discriminating reviews. No matter how great the author's reputation may be, so far, I have failed to notice any "sacred cows" who are immune from criticism.

My reason for writing is a recent review of Pearl Buck's latest book, "The Promise," by Struthers Burt. While I agree in the main with his timely comments, I was riled a little by his statement, "There is no doubt that the English have been idiots in their handling of foreigners."

That Britain's colonial policy has not been perfect is cheerfully conceded, but everything in this world is comparative, and I would be grateful to Mr. Burt if he would cite any other nation in the world whose handling of foreigners (or native races, which I presume is what he means) has been more intelligent, humane, just, and wise in the long view. Certainly the limited amount of experience the United States has had in such matters does not place our friendly neighbor to the South on any such pedestal.

If the British had been such idiots in handling foreigners as Mr. Burt states, would South Africa be fighting side by side with Britain? And India, the subject of so much misinformed criticism (some of it from Pearl Buck), has thousands of its native population fighting with the Allies. Why? There is no compulsion. And the Canadian Army has literally thousands of foreigners in its ranks.

Certainly no other nation has a record at all comparable to that of the British people.

G. O. KNOWLES, M.P.
Toronto, Canada

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TRADE Winds

WHEN THE exchange liner *Gripsholm* steamed into New York recently she carried some fifteen hundred passengers, interned for two years in Japan, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. Most of the reporters, however, had eyes only for the publicity-wise Emily Hahn who, not content with holding her two-year-old, half-Chinese baby Carola in her arms, sported a long black stogie to boot. She puffed determinedly, gave the newshawks a few crumbs, and saved her best stuff for a very swell two-part story of her own that appeared in *The New Yorker*.

There were a lot of other people on the *Gripsholm*, however, who had had a darn sight more exciting and perilous time than the photogenic Emily, but who were more or less overlooked in the Hahnward rush. Royal Gunnison, for instance, and his wife. Gunnison was broadcasting from Manila for Mutual when the Nips caught up with him. He's writing his story for Viking, who will publish it under the title of "So Sorry: No Peace." One of his anecdotes concerns what must have been the most unusual softball game ever played.

The inmates of the Shanghai concentration camp were lucky enough to dig up some softball equipment, and took the game up avidly to kill time and keep fairly fit. The Jap captain of the guard turned out to be a ball fan. He watched the games for days without comment, then suddenly sent a formal challenge to the internees' committee for a game against his own picked team.

The internees sensed trouble, and tried to duck the game. The captain thought they feared a trouncing, and became more and more insistent. Finally a date was set. A big crowd of internees and Japs turned out for the game. The atmosphere was tense as the Americans prepared to take their first turn at bat.

It was a slaughter. Before the Japs had retired three men, the internees had scored 27 runs, were trying desperately to be put out deliberately for fear of reprisals. The umpires were Japs! At the end of three innings the score was 28-1, and the Jap captain had enough. "It more better we do not play for score," he announced, sucking through his teeth. "After this we play for sportsmanship!"

The repatriates aboard the *Gripsholm* had made the first half of their return run on the overcrowded Jap liner *Teia Maru*. Gunnison reports that the night before they left the ship at Goa, in Portuguese India, some American missionary ladies got down on their hands and knees on the decks and scrubbed some of the filth away. They explained that they wanted things to look as spick and span as possible for the Japs who would board the vessel the next day. The crew laughed at them while they scrubbed. Then, two days later, when the *Teia Maru* quit the harbor, the missionaries stood at the aft-rail of the still-anchored *Gripsholm* and sang farewell hymns to the Japs. What on earth are you going to do about people like that? . . . .

HAVING CONTRACTED, in a moment of gay abandon, to edit a "Pocket Book of Anecdotes" for Bob De Graff, I was thumbing through a collection of old Trade Winds columns the other evening to see what I could salvage from my own output. In the December 5, 1942, issue I ran across a paragraph that described a party a few weeks previous at the Raymond Loewy office atop the Brentano Building. I told something about Mr. Loewy, more about his co-host for the occasion, Mr. Paul Hollister. Not one word did I say about an obliging young man who stood at the piano, and cheerfully sang any current tune that was asked for. Nobody was paying very much attention to him except an anonymous young lady who sat on the floor with her knees crossed and gazed at him in mute adoration, and my wife and myself, who love to hear Kern, Rodgers, and Gershwin songs and such. On the way home, my wife, I remember, remarked that the young man had a very pleasant way about him, and might go places. She wasn't wrong. His name was Frank Sinatra.

Today, the ushers at broadcasting studios where Sinatra is scheduled to sing have been instructed to keep dizzy young things out of the first twelve rows, lest they ruin the program with their squeals and animal cries. Some of the other things they do in their excitement, you would not believe if I told you.

The night club where Sinatra first packed them in a year or so ago is bankrupt and shuttered. The big-timer who sneeringly dubbed him "Frank Not-so-hotra" hasn't had a job in months. In the world of café society, strange things happen. If you don't believe me, read Lucius Beebe's "Snoot If You Must," hailed by one outraged critic as "the twelve worst books of 1943." . . .

H. ALLEN SMITH'S third book for Doubleday will be called "Like Elephants Remember." . . . A. S. Barnes and Co., who have acquired the entire Smith and Durrell list, report a whopping demand for Henry Neely's "The Star Finder," which enables the reader to "identify every important star discernible to the naked eye at any time of night, any time of year, from any place on earth." What more could you ask for $2.75? . . . Another book bargain: the newest and most beautiful edition of "War and Peace," in two immaculate volumes, published by the Heritage Press, at five dollars a set. . . . A beminked young matron braced a clerk in Brooklyn's biggest department store last week for a copy of that birth-control job called "Rhythm." Shown the regular dollar edition, she expressed a desire for a ritzier format. When she heard that it came only in the one dollar binding she took it reluctantly and declared: "Well, I guess it's good enough for every day!" . . . From the Coast comes the story of the stout party who made a million dollars without budging from his comfortable couch. A visitor found him one day wearing a bathrobe with enormous checks, and a number sewed on to each check. "What's the idea of those numbers?" he inquired. "Watch me," said the Croesus. He summoned his butler, yawned, and ordered "Jeeves, scratch Number 23"! . . .

A HISTORY OF CANADA, entitled "Dominion of the North," by Donald Creighton, of the University of Toronto, will be published early this Spring by Houghton Mifflin. "In the past," says Professor Creighton, "Canada has been taken for granted—by Britishers who thought they could rely on its instinctive allegiance to the Empire, and by Americans who thought they could count on its inherent North Americanism. Both were partly wrong. Canada is a complex

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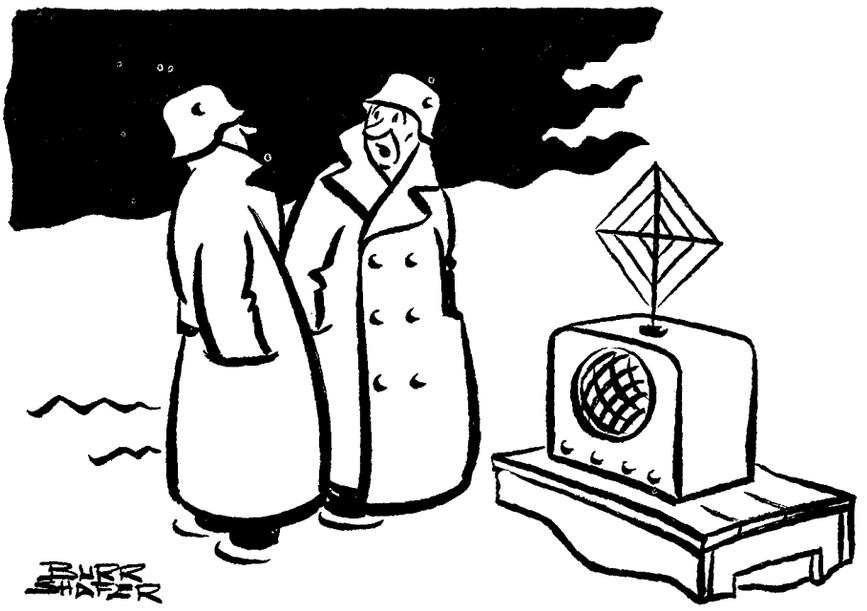

"According to the High Command, we're well within our own lines, though the Moscow radio says we're behind the Russian lines. Personally—I think we're adrift on an iceberg."

country, with varied affiliations and loyalties. The main purpose of this book is to explain the different component parts of Canadian nationality in their historical origin, to show why Canada is and will desire to remain a separate North American nation, and to account for its peculiar relationships with both Great Britain and the United States." . . .

CAROLE BACHE'S "Paradise Isle" (Knopf) contains interesting sidelights on Japanese customs. Take the disease called erysipelas, for instance. In America, we know it's highly infectious. In Japan, however, because the Emperor inadvertently left it out of his list of infectious diseases, it is illegal for doctors so to declare or prescribe for it. They'll have to wait until the Emperor gets around to it again. He is reported otherwise engaged at the moment. . . . Coming from England: a book containing all of Virginia Woolf's short stories, under the title of "A Haunted House," and a big book on Jane Austen by G. B. Stern and Sheila Kaye-Smith. . . . Terence Holliday, at 49 East 49th Street, always seems to have the latest English books in stock before other shops ever have heard of them. . . . Harry Scherman, head of the Book-of-the-Month Club, went to high school with Ed Wynn and Alexander Woollcott. That didn't keep him from turning several shades of red when Hildegarde called on him to take a bow in the packed Persian Room of the Hotel Plaza a few nights ago. . . . Scherman says he's getting a bit fed up with the recurrent story of a Hokinson lady rushing up to him at a party and exclaiming "I've always dreamed of meeting the president of my club." . . . One day Jan Struther brought a ball and set of jacks to the B.O.M.C. offices. She intended them for her daughter and was quite put out when they disappeared. A search was instituted, and the jacks finally recovered. Harry Scherman had sneaked them into his private office; when apprehended, he was trying vainly to get past "threesies." . . .

GOODY, GOODY: more agent stories! One concerns a brown horse, hitched to a milk wagon, who looked up one morning to see a poster staring her in the face, declaring that the Ringling Circus was doing two shows a day at the Garden. She calmly trotted over to the stage door of Madison Square, and entered. "Hi, girls," she neighed, to be greeted with noisy expressions of surprise and delight.

"But, Beulah," protested one nag, "what are you doing with that cheesy milk wagon you're hitched to? A year ago you were the star of the show here, with blue plumes over your ears, and beautiful performers somersaulting on your back!" "Aw," answered Beulah, "what can you expect from that darn agent Leland Hayward?"

Then there's the story of the agent who tried to dissuade a client from chucking a big-salaried studio job to go back East and write a novel. "Why do it?" wailed the agent. "You can't make any money that way. How much did you make from your last novel?" "Seventy-five thousand dollars," replied the writer with some pride. "See," said the agent, "what did I tell you?"

BENNETT CERF.

A NEW

Margot Blair

MYSTERY

by

KATHLEEN MOORE

KNIGHT

"Extra good intrigue thriller."—JACK KETCH, N.Y. *Herald Tribune*

WHEN Adrien ter Broek poured three million dollars into Margot Blair's hands, and asked her to deliver them to Katrien, his daughter, when—and if she could be found, he couldn't foresee the long shadow of the Swastika that would fall across Margot's path, nor the unseen eyes which would follow her glittering burden on a New York-to-Mexico trip that left violence, intrigue and sudden death in its wake.

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January CRIME CLUB *Selection*

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RUSSIAN WRITING SINCE THE REVOLUTION

(*Continued from page* 5)

plays, none of which, however, won any enduring success.

A second group of dramatists, most of them peasant and proletarian writers, were concerned with propaganda plays, often crudely executed, and also with plays on the civil war and social problems, such as Alexander Neverov's "A Tale of the Womenfolk" (1923), Gladkov's "The Band" (1932), and Vladimir Bill Beloserkovski's "The Storm" (1926) and "Echo" (1924).

A third group of dramatists, to which belong young Soviet writers with a post-revolutionary training, have contributed plays of considerable merit. Among the best of these dramatists are A. N. Afinogenev, Vladimir Kirshon, V. V. Vishnevski, and N. F. Pogodin.

As in fiction, the pronounced tendency of the drama has been in the direction of realism, in which attempts were made to grapple with the conflicts induced by the swiftly changing tempo of Soviet life. People soon wearied of the forthright propaganda plays, such as Mayakovski's bizarre "Mystery-Bouffe" and Tretyakov's rather crude drama of imperialism, "Roar China" (1926). A few of the civil war plays, especially Ivanov's "Armored Train," Bulgakov's "Days of the Turbins" (1925), and Trenev's "Lyubov Yarovaya" (1926) were well constructed and strikingly realistic.

The Five-Year Plan was as prolific in plays as it was in novels, and a monotonous sameness attended both. Plays were formed to a stereotyped pattern and were often hopelessly and boringly didactic. The invariable theme was a bit of villainous wrecking on a construction job or a collectivized farm, in which the counter-revolutionary plotters were foiled and the good Communists triumphant. Afinogenev's fine drama "Fear" (1931) was an exception; although the usual counter-revolutionary conspiracy is present the play also attempts to solve in terms of individual and not mass psychology the significant moral problem of the Revolution's right to terror. Vladimir Kirshon's "Bread" (1933) and N. F. Pogodin's "Tempo" (1930) were also much better than the average Five-Year Plan plays, despite poor construction and careless language. And Oloysha's "A List of Benefits" (1931), very much like Afinogenev's "Fear" leaves room for the workings of individual psychology in dramatizing the conflict between individualism and socialism.

Recent Trends

Most recent tendencies in Soviet drama in no sense lessen the emphasis upon realism, but they are running in the direction of a fuller comprehension of the individual's problems in a collectivist society. There is a deeper searching into the cause and effect of universal human behavior. And coupled with this is an earnest concern with the Russian people as a whole, unconditioned by time, a tendency that is reflected in historical plays and in the dramatic adaptations of novels of the past, such as Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" and "War and Peace."

More sympathetic understanding than critical explanation is required in order to grasp the real significance of the development of Soviet literature. Ever since its existence Soviet Russia has been in an almost constant state of emergency, and this fact has often dictated the frequent radical changes and sharp reverses in the life and culture of the country. On the surface there was an abiding impermanency. The more enduring values and universal constants of human behavior, however, were never very far beneath the surface, and this was quite true in the swiftly changing literary trends. The highly specialized Communist conscience in the novels, let us say, of Nikolai Ostrovski—"Those Born by the Storm" (1936) and "How the Steel was Tempered" (1937)—could give way to ethical and idealistic trends, to the universal emotions and values that transcend all classes, in the works of a score of other novelists.

Thus one may discern in recent trends distinct links with the past, for social idealism, as well as an interest in the human soul, had been pronounced traits in the literary production of the old intelligentsia. Even the historical novel, of which the past furnished some few brilliant examples, has taken on the proportions of a widespread movement in Soviet Russia, as it has recently in America. The tendency of foreign critics to dismiss this eager interest in the historical past as an enforced escape from dangerous contentious themes of the present is hardly justified. It is only natural that Soviet writers should evince a desire to apply their dialectic method in an effort to reinterpret the past in the light of the present. The method is usually the brutal, realistic one, devoid of sentimental romancing, that has been used so successfully in writing on the civil war, and in most cases the documentation is extraordinarily full.

"Peter I" (1929-1434) of A. N. Tol-

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

UNUSUAL DEATHS OF AUTHORS

From the brief descriptions of the out-of-the-ordinary manner in which they met death, can you identify the ten famous authors in this week's quiz? Five correct answers is par, seven is very good, eight or better is excellent. Answers are on page 21.

1. This ancient playwright is said to have been killed by an eagle's letting fall on his bald head a tortoise whose shell the bird was unable to crack.
2. At the age of 85 this ancient poet choked to death on a grape seed.
3. A passerby having given this starving English dramatist a guinea, he dashed to a bakery, bought a loaf of bread, and choked to death on the first mouthful.
4. While sailing on the Mediterranean in a defectively designed schooner, this poet was drowned during a sudden storm.
5. At the age of twenty-nine this Elizabethan dramatist was stabbed to death in a tavern brawl.
6. Too many pickled herrings downed with Rhenish wine caused the death of this Elizabethan dramatist, whose chief claim to fame is that he once sneered at Shakespeare in a pamphlet.
7. To avoid starving to death in London, this underpaid seventeen-year-old genius, who could write in the style of the fifteenth century as well as his own, committed suicide.
8. This famous French novelist was found dead in his bedroom after he had been asphyxiated by charcoal fumes from a defective flue.
9. An anonymous letter to this Russian poet informed him that a brother-in-law was being too attentive to the poet's wife; in the ensuing duel he was mortally wounded.
10. Stricken by a fit of apoplexy while walking in a woods, this French author was carried to a village doctor who proceeded to make a post-mortem without realizing that his patient was not yet dead.

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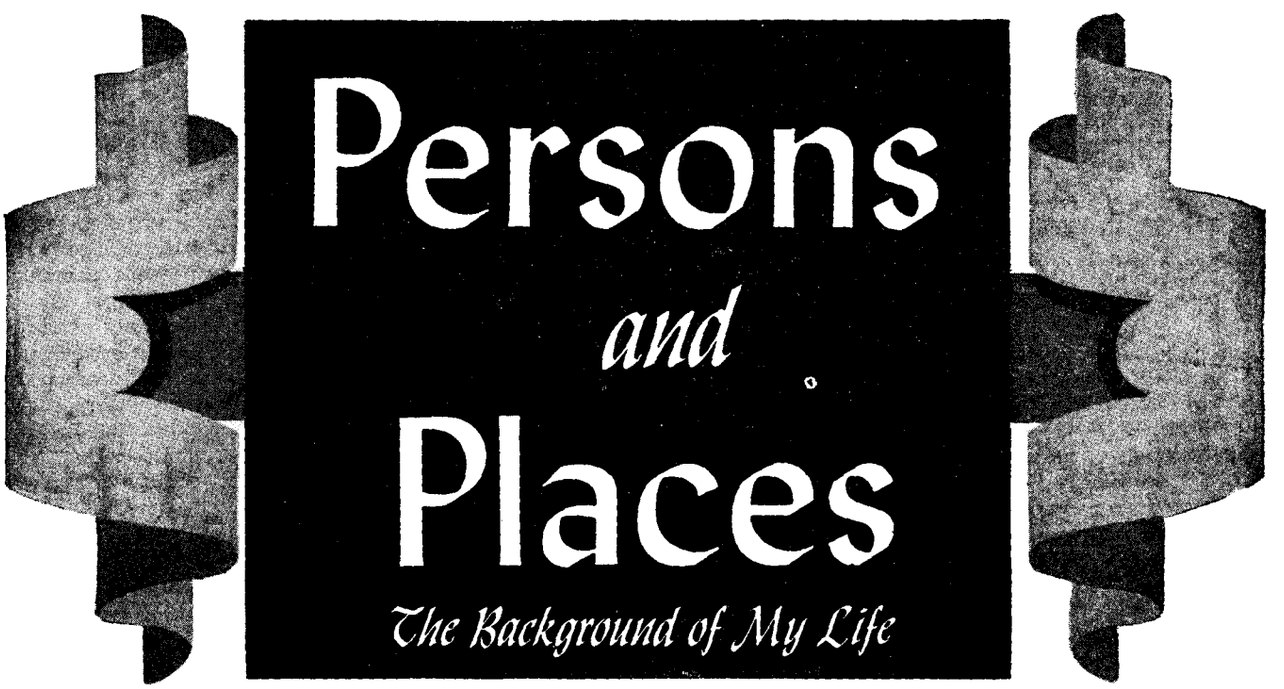
The New Year begins with a Great Biography

George Santayana's



GEORGE SANTAYANA, author of "The Last Puritan" and world-renowned philosopher, here tells the fascinating story of his boyhood, youth, and college years in America and Spain.

His autobiography has such different and contrasting backgrounds as Boston and the little Spanish town of Avila. His story of the years spent in both places, of his family, associates and friends, has all the wisdom and magic that characterize Santayana's writing at its best. His recreation of the Harvard he knew is vividly realized and exquisitely nostalgic, without a hint of sentimentality.

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stoy is one of the finest of these Soviet historical novels. He treats the period of the great Czar as one of transition, not unlike that of the present day Russia, and one can see in the sympathetic portrait of Peter a forerunner of Lenin or Stalin. Where A. N. Tolstoy is largely deficient, in the psychology of his characters, another older writer, Sergeyev-Tsenski, admirably succeeds. Since his expansive novel on the Crimean War, he has recently embarked on a theme connected with the First World War, "The Brusilov Break-Through."

Two other older writers have devoted themselves to historical fiction. Aleksai Chapygin has produced "Stenka Razin" (1927), a thrilling tale of a seventeenth-century Russian Robin Hood, presented as a kind of early "Bolshevik" leader, but the authentic atmosphere and local color of Stenka Razin's time are exactly recreated. The "Tsushima" (1943) of A. Novikov-Priboi is on a quite different theme—a chronicle of the sinking of the Russian fleet in the Russo-Japanese War.

Yuri Tynyanov's historical novels are concerned solely with literary figures of the past—"Kukhlya" (1925), a story of the pathetically comic Decembrist poet and friend of Pushkin, Küchelbecker; "Vasir Mukhtar" (1929), which tells the story of the famous dramatist, Griboyedov, in the early years of the 19th century; and "Pushkin" (1936), which portrays the great Russian poet. Tynyanov is more of a scholar than a novelist; his documentation is impeccable and the atmosphere of the past is admirably reproduced, but his characters come to life with difficulty. In these historical novels, and in many others of less note, one is impressed by the repeated emphasis upon the patriotic motif. It is not so much an arrant chauvinism or nationalism as a glorification of the unity and heroism of the past with an appeal for similar qualities now in resisting the enemies of the socialist fatherland. For Soviet Russia was well aware of the dangers from without, and this note of patriotic warning against a definite enemy—Japan—was plainly sounded in P. Pavlenko's novel, "In the East" (1937).

Vladimir Mayakovsky

A new force is apparent in Soviet literature which clearly sets it apart in the last twenty-five years from the literature of any other country. The total production, which has been enormous, is thoroughly penetrated by social consciousness and a profound responsibility to the people. Soviet literature has many of its roots in the past, but it ceaselessly endeavors to integrate all the best elements of the past and present in an effort to create the vision of a glorious future.

The new note may perhaps best be described by the much-debated critical slogan, "socialist realism," that first appeared in 1932. However new the term, exponents of socialist realism existed in Russia long before the advent of the Soviets. For writers such as Belinski, Herzen, Chernyshevski, and even Tolstoy, who believed that the individual and the community were not opposing, but complementary, factors in each other's well-being, were in a sense devotees of socialist realism. Of late, bourgeois realism has displayed a degree of defeatism, frustration, and pessimism that suggests a progressive disintegration of a modern society that it describes. With a loss of faith has come a loss of social consciousness, and the bourgeois writer tends to become self-centered and hostile to the community.

The difference between the Soviet realist and the bourgeois realist is essentially a difference between faith in life and lack of faith. Behind the Soviet writer's accurate description of reality is a desire to obtain a clearer understanding of all that must be abolished and all that must be built up. If there is tragedy in his works, there is no pessimism. Socialist realism attempts to integrate literature and life, to direct the creative present towards a more meaningful creative future. Soviet literature has scarcely begun to realize its vast potentialities, but its present vitality, positive affirmation, and soaring faith give promise of a great future.

This article, by Ernest J. Simmons, Associate Professor in the Department of Languages at Cornell University, will be included in the "Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature" now being prepared under the general editorship of Horatio Smith.

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Literary Lifesaver

THE RAFT BOOK. By Harold Gatty. New York: George Grady Press. 1943. 152 *pp.* $3.25.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

IT has occurred to Harold Gatty, the old flying companion of Wiley Post, that most of the advice offered to men down from the air on a rubber raft, or overboard from a sunken destroyer, is too sophisticated. A man in that position doesn't have much. He himself spent some time among the natives of the Pacific, and being interested in navigation, went into the question of how they managed to make voyages of some hundreds of miles, hitting their destination on the nose without compasses. (The story that they used gourds weighted with water and with holes at different heights for star observation is a legend.)

It also occurred to him that a man on a raft was not in a very different position from those early navigators, so he set out to bring their methods up to date, asking that the shipwrecked modern sailor take with him nothing more than a watch and this book, with its good star chart and simplifications of tables used by navigators.

These things are for finding position; the book also contains a short compendium on how to get from where you are to the place you want to reach (or can reach) and how to stay alive while getting there. There are good pictures of the more familiar seabirds, advice on what their flight indicates, and advice on how to catch them; similar information on most of the pelagic fishes. The whole is printed in a shore-going edition on ordinary paper for armchair reading and in a waterproof edition that will fit in the pocket of a flying jacket for practical use—and a very good little book either way, rather better than the government publications which essay to cover the same ground.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 511)

LOUISE M. BOWMAN:
SEA LAVENDER
(CANADIAN POET)

My Puritan Grandmother! . . . .
. . . . . .
Searching salt sea pools
For Beauty's shadow,
All her rigid rules
And cold austereness . . . . . .
Melt into airs of evening warm and mild,
And I find revelation, sweet indeed,
In her dear treasures of sea shells and weed.

8 reasons why "I CAN GO HOME AGAIN"

makes Yankees want to reform the South . . . makes Southerners chuckle appreciatively . . . reveals "the most paradoxical culture in America—barbarous, virile and generous."

because

		SEE
1	Georgia law allows a mule and a train equal rights in a railroad track, "provided they do not attempt to occupy it at the same time."	Pp. 190-91
2	A mob once gathered to lynch the Governor of Georgia.	Pp. 289-91
3	A Hardshell Baptist congregation solemnly voted to burn down its Church building to settle a quarrel.	Pp. 240-41
4	A new light is cast on the Creation of Eve.	Pg. 100
5	A Georgia jury pronounced "the hog guilty and the cow innocent" when both were struck by the same train.	Pp. 190-91
6	A Georgian can be acquitted of bigamy, though admitting marriage to each of two women present in the courtroom.	Pp. 268-73
7	A Georgia farmer, after listening to Roosevelt, said: "I wouldn't have had my dog hear that speech for a thousand dollars."	Pg. 247
8	The election of Judge Powell as "pastor" made the distilling of communion wine legal.	Pg. 241

I CAN GO HOME AGAIN

in which **JUDGE ARTHUR G. POWELL** *former Vice-Pres. of American Bar Assn. takes the people of his state apart — and still loves them!*

First printing sold out — second on press. $3.00

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The Phoenix Nest

WAR CHRISTMAS IN JUDEA

THE bells of Bethlehem rang on Christmas Eve.
Ancient Jerusalem stood real and near.
Lights that were blackened in war's darkest year
Blazed forth again, bidding all men perceive
How the transfiguring power can still retrieve
From barbarism all our world holds dear.
They sang, *"It came upon a midnight clear—!"*
Soldiers and sailors, in battle's brief reprieve.

From the Shepherd's Field home to the Child they came,
While pilgrims by the thousands sought to pass
Within the churches for patriarchal mass
Where round wreathed altars burned bright candle flame. . .
For us all—for us all who suffer and believe
The bells of Bethlehem rang, this Christmas Eve!

I was recently looking up Goldsmith's line "And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind," from "The Deserted Village," and I stumbled upon the lines that gave Ilka Chase the title for her latest book:

In bed we laugh, in bed we cry;
And, born in bed, in bed we die.

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The near approach a bed may show
Of human bliss to human woe.

But I wonder how much Miss Chase knows of Isaac de Benserade, the French poet and dramatist of the seventeenth century, author of the lines at the head of our column, as translated by Dr. Samuel Johnson? Richelieu and Mazarin were his patrons, and he was best known for his sonnet, "Job," taken as rivaling a sonnet by Voiture entitled "Uranie." Here was a case where two sonnets started a sort of literary civil war at court between the adherents of the two poets, who called themselves Jobelins and Uranins!

Do you know the line in Du Maurier's "The Martian" where the narrator speaks of Barty Josselin's desire to illustrate Thackeray's "Esmond," which was destined to be done by another hand, and particularly that he wished to make a drawing of Beatrix Esmond descending the stair with a candle? Sure enough, Du Maurier did illustrate "Henry Esmond," and drew that very picture! In writing "The Martian" he also had fun introducing himself as George Du Maurier, one of the entertaining guests on several occasions!

The Music Room at 133 West 44th Street has published "Six Songs for Democracy," being "Discos de Las Brigadas Internacionales." If you honor, as I do, what the International Brigades did for democracy in the late war of the Spanish People in Spain against the Spanish, Italian, and German Fascists you will wish to have these records. I cannot recommend them to you in better words than those of our great Negro singer and actor, Paul Robeson. He says, "These songs of the Spanish struggle deeply reflect the democratic spirit. That spirit, like Joe Hill, 'never died.' This album is a 'must'."

Earle Walbridge wonders, in purest conjecture, whether Kipling didn't meet some "of that curious, sanctimonious gentry, the Seventh Day Adventists, and hastily change 'tells them tales of the Seventh Day' to 'tales of His daily toil.' . . . Having been brought up by kicking and screaming (silently, because I was much attached to my mother) in the faith, up to my seventeenth year when I escaped to college—I know only too well what they are like." My best contributor also supplies me with the following (which I am almost ashamed to use, as I already owe him for so much that has refeathered and generally brightened the *Nest!*)

Next on the docket (after "Angel Island" and "The Wings of the Morning") comes "The Mystery," by Stewart Edward White and Samuel Hopkins Adams (McClure, Phillips, 1907) which old-timers should remember. ("'Good Lord! don't you remember the *Laughing Lass* Mystery and The Disappearance of Doctor Schermerhorn?' 'Karl Augustus Schermerhorn, the man whose experiments to identify telepathy with the Marconi wireless waves made such a furore in the papers?'"—p. 7). He chartered a schooner in San Francisco harbor, under command of Captain Ezra Selover ("Old Scrubs"); the crew included "Handy Solomon," one of whose forearms ended in a steel hook, the nigger, and the Mexican, Perdosa, as well as The Narrator, Ralph Slade, free-lance journalist. They sailed to a volcanic island in the Pacific where the professor "from the molten eruptions of the rocked earth [took] gases and potencies that are nameless"—but which he christened Celestium. With it he planned to illuminate the world, cure mankind—"magnetism was to be his slave. Aerial navigation, transmutation of metals, the screening of gravity"—but he was vanquished by the stupidity of his crew. The book has the fire and intensity of first-class story-telling, though (or even because) it has overtones of "Treasure Island" and "The Wrecker" (by Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne). Edmund Pearson wrote in "Books in Black or Red" (Macmillan, 1923): "Who that has once read 'The Wrecker' can forget the moment when the crew of the *Currency Lass* run up to the deck of Captain Trent's ship into 'the dusky blaze of a sunset red as blood'?" Sim-

Fraser Young's Literary Crypt: No. 30

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. The solution to Crypt No. 30 will be found in the next issue.

GBKC QDLCEKFBKH FD MJJN

KJPFQLR TQGQ DJLCFDM SEL

HJGBA FDQSGFQLR.

SRGJD--NJD OEBD

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 29

THERE IS IN EVERY HUMAN COUNTENANCE EITHER A HISTORY OR A PROPHECY, WHICH MUST SADDEN, OR AT LEAST SOFTEN, EVERY REFLECTING OBSERVER.

S. T. COLERIDGE.
—OMNIANA, I.

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ilarly, one remembers the last apparition of the *Laughing Lass*—"the piercingly brilliant jeweled wonder of a ship set in the midst of a swirl of vari-colored radiance"; some one had propped open the chest full of celestium!

When Slade was rescued by the U. S. Cruiser *Wolverine* he was singing Handy Solomon's chanty:

"Oh, their coffin was their ship, and their grave it was the sea!
Blow high, blow low, what care we!
And the quarter that we gave them was to sink them in the sea!
Down on the coast of the high Barbaree-ee."

Louis Untermeyer is editing for The Heritage Press "The American Poets Series," a series of beautiful editions of the works of the great American poets. Each book has a critical biography and each group of poems in the book a special commentary, all by the editor. So far two books have appeared, "The Poems of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow" and "The Complete Poems of Edgar Allan Poe." The former is illustrated with wood-engravings by Boyd Hanna, printed in color; the latter with lithographic illustrations drawn on the stone by Hugo Steiner-Prag. In each case the letterpress and arrangement of the page is excellent, the binding and boxing of each volume adequate. It seems to me that the Longfellow should become the accepted Longfellow of our time. It is selective, and while I miss such poems as "Scanderbeg," "Helen of Tyre," and "Belisarius," it is true that "Sandalphon" and "The Bells of San Blas," which are included, are in the same metre as the last two, a metre, by the way, in which Longfellow was invariably fortunate. The wood-blocks of Boyd Hanna are usually successful as illustration. Mr. Untermeyer has given us, in brief compass, a valuable reappraisal of Longfellow, and has proved his points by his selections. The Poe is also interesting, inasmuch as Mr. Untermeyer has included not only all of Poe's poems, but also all of Poe's writings about poetry. But here I do not care so much for the illustrative interpretations of Steiner-Prag, though they are in the vein. To return to Longfellow, he made a singularly haunting poem from the sound of the bells of ruined Spanish missions, yet his poem does not end with the dead, but with such a verse concerning a new faith, that it seems to me it would be a good watchword to take for our own time. If you do not recall it, here it is—a fine stanza:

O Bells of San Blas, in vain
Ye call back the Past again!
The Past is deaf to your prayer;
Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into light;
It is daybreak everywhere.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

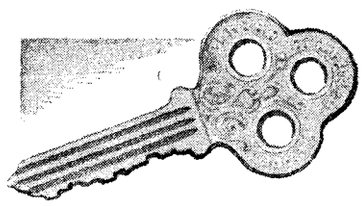
1. Aeschylus. 2. Anacreon. 3. Thomas Otway. 4. Percy Bysshe Shelley. 5. Christopher Marlowe. 6. Robert Greene. 7. Thomas Chatterton. 8. Emile Zola. 9. Alexander Pushkin. 10. Abbé Prévost.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE DEATHS OF LORA KAREN *Roman McDougald* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	N. Y. woman poisoned with detective Philip Cabot standing by. Greenwich Village artist also perishes.	Action and suspense ample. Plot over-involved with confusing criss-cross motives and almost too sudden solution.	Readable
FIFTH MYSTERY BOOK *Christie, Pentecost, Gayle, Wylie* (Farrar & Rinehart: $2.)	Assorted murders in Florida, England, American chemical plant, and Alabama mansion solved by sundry sleuths—Miss Marple only "name" present.	New-comer Ethel Gayle's "Murder Buys a Rug" best in book, although others are acceptable.	Not quite up to predecessors
MURDER SOLVES A PROBLEM *Marion Bramhall* (Crime Club: $2.)	Knife finishes beautiful and unhappy wife of philandering New England lawyer, who exits likewise. College prof. does major deducing.	Good characters, plentiful action, and surprising solution—also adequate love interest.	Recommended
ARROW POINTING NOWHERE *Elizabeth Daly* (Farrar & Rinehart: $2.)	Brace of murders in dignified old New York family gives Henry Gramadge stiff problem to solve.	After rather delayed start, story picks up handsomely and moves excitingly to unusual and well-deduced solution.	Good

Where Do America's Most Influential People Live Today?



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The Washington Post

Eugene Meyer, Editor & Publisher

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PERSONALS

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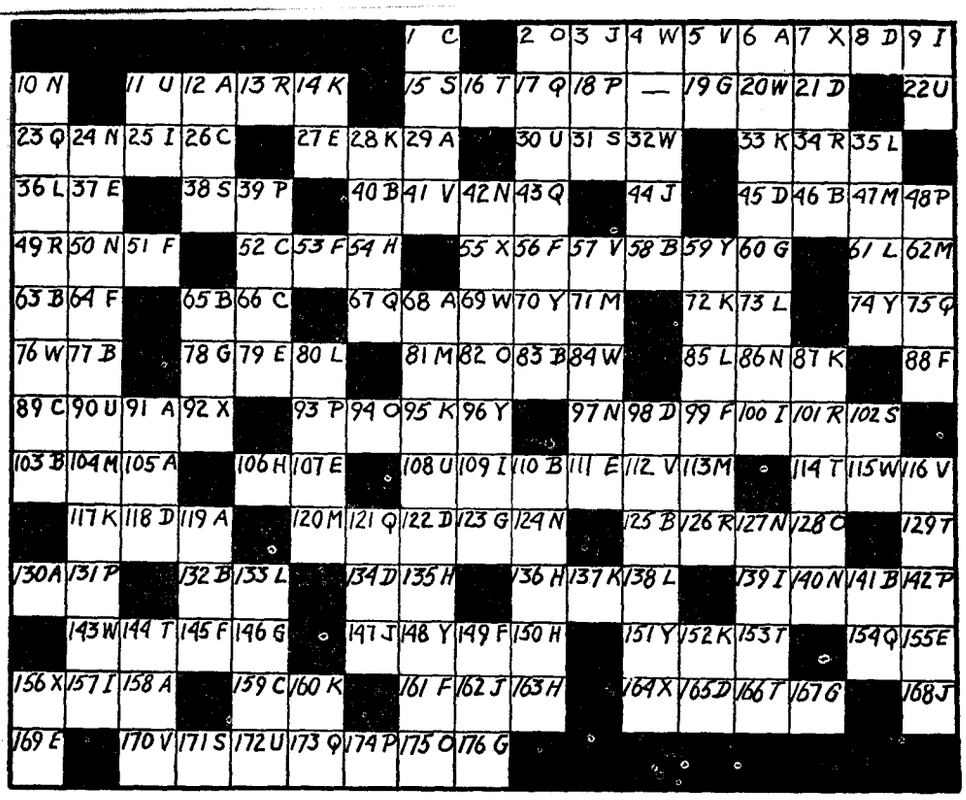
The Crostics Club

MARGARETTA R. COWENHOVEN, stationed at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, is the first WAVE to write us of her affection for DCs. For years she helped her mother, an arthritis sufferer, to do them, but now she is on her own.

Morriss H. Needleman, Brooklyn, who with William Bradley Otis of the C.C.N.Y., is the compiler of a two-volume "Outline-History of English Literature," and is at work on one in American Literature, scheduled for March, 1944 (Barnes and Noble), in alluding to James D. Hart's quandary over the spelling of the author of "The Apostle," writes at interesting statistical length over their dilemma in spelling the "Bard of Avon." Out of 400 authorities consulted, 300 spelled it Shakespeare; but according to S. A. Tannenbaum, the Bard himself spelled it Shakspere, and in all probability it will in time revert to this spelling. We laymen little sense the problems involved even in compiling outlines!

Mrs. Carl R. Gray III, St. Paul, thinking I'd get a "kick out of the funny angles DCs, bless 'em, occasion," or that such "data on the sociological effects of DCs should not go unrecorded," furnishes us with this very amusing and clever bit of fact (or is it fiction?), abridged for space: "Along about the second year of my DC ing I tendered a copy of the *SRL* to Peg, and got for my pains a deathless suspicion on the part of her husband that I deliberately set out to create a marital rift in his once happy home. At noon the following day her beds were still unmade, dishes unwashed, and her mother had succumbed under the weight of the Britannica which she had been reading to Peg over the telephone. . . . By the end of the week Ken had spent fifteen dollars for lumber to build a bookcase for the twenty-five dollar second-hand Americana, some six dollars on all available DC books in town, and ten dollars for a second-hand unabridged Webster. Furthermore, he was plaintively complaining that a married man with three children should be able at least to inquire into his family's state of health without being snapped at for interrupting a train of thought! He spent three morose evenings in a row at our house because Peg found the radio disturbing. . . . Incidentally they bought a "Lincoln Library" at my behest. Although it's out of print, I think that is one of the best single sources of information there is. . . . Whether DCs are the reason, Ken leaves next week for boot camp as an Ensign in the Navy, as retribution or a desperate need for someone to talk to, I don't know. Any way he leaves and so does my husband, which seems significant. . . . I truly think that DCs are a most effective anesthetic for all sorts of ills."

E. S. K.



Double-Crostics: No. 512

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1940 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 19 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Author of the "Life of John Marshall" (Pulitzer Prize 1920).

B. Taking everything together (3 wds.)

C. Treaty of 1807 (Napoleonic Wars).

D. Movement in European Literature, end of 18th century.

E. All but (2 wds.)

F. In a manner stated or to be stated (3 wds.)

G. English physicist (1820-93) (Belfast Address 1874).

H. A seditious tumult (Fr.)

I. A streamlet.

J. The depth of friable earth.

K. The common English shrew.

L. A return after a digression (Rhetoric).

M. The Stone that deciphered the Egyptian hieroglyphics.

N. Pertaining to only one structural and functional unit (Plant or animal) (comp.)

O. A Don Marquis creation.

P. The continued lordship of a race of rulers.

Q. A taunting allusion or reminder.

R. Original name of Joshua (Bib.)

S. What Petruchio did to Kate.

T. Vigilant.

U. Island seat of a famous statue of Apollo.

V. In due season.

W. Deficient; lacking.

X. Formal and ceremonial acts.

Y. A modern transliteration of the Hebrew word Jehovah.

WORDS

6 29 12 105 130 68 119 158 91

40 83 46 103 125 141 110 77 58 65 63 132

52 159 89 26 1 66

8 165 134 98 118 21 122 45

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